

The Carl Junction City Council met in special session on Tuesday January 30, 2024 at 7:00 PM at City Hall. Mayor Mark Powers called the meeting to order with the following present: LaDonna Allen, Rick Flinn, Bill Maguire, Bob McAfee, David Pyle, Roger Spencer, and Hollie LaVigne. Mike Burns and Bob McAfee were absent. Also present were City Administrator Steve Lawver, and City Clerk Alaina Wright.

AGENDA

LaDonna Allen motioned to add public forum to the agenda. Rick Flinn seconded. All in favor. No opposed with two absent. David Pyle motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Hollie LaVigne seconded. All in favor. No opposed with two absent.

PUBLIC FORUM

Doris McDaniel-905 Sheridan-She said it has concerned her for quite some time that the city has been neglectful. She said the situation with the police department is of grave concern. She feels money was misappropriated for city leadership and law enforcement has been hung out to dry and this is not fair to the citizens.

Mark Greg-322 Tee Lane-He doesn't feel the size of the police force is keeping up with the times or the amount of pay that people can get elsewhere. He also feels there is plenty money elsewhere for other things that should be able to be used for the police department.

Shelly Albright-222 Fairway Drive-She's very disappointed to be part of a community that has fallen so far when it comes to law enforcement. She said that we have three patrol officers to keep our community safe is negligent and scary. Mayor Powers said he would like to hear about the ideas she has for funding the police department. She suggested the city find out why the use tax has failed previously when it was on the ballot. Shelly also said she has heard that city administration was given a large raise while the police department received nothing. Mayor Powers said that was not true. LaDonna Allen said the facts were available, the budgets are all available on the website and everything is part of public record if anyone requestes it.

Joel Ford-102 S Windwood-He got a call from two women who dropped off a vehicle. He called the police department, was told there was one officer available who was at the school and there would be not an officer responding. He said there is a big problem coming for the city if we don't do something about the situation.

Kristina Dunlap-1200 Briarbrook Drive Suite B-She said her husband went to work and unlocked the storage shed and went into the building and came back there was a man who was in the storage shed who she thought ended up having a knife and several guns. She said there was only one police officer on duty when that happened and that is not safe the the officers.

Chris McDaniel-905 Larson-He said that the use tax being turned down four times should tell the city something and the property owners are tired of footing the bill for the city. He said the city is not recruiting businesses and couldn't anyway because there is nowhere to put any new businesses. LaDonna Allen said that the city recently signed with a consultant that specifically works to bring businesses into small communities like Carl Junction. Hollie LaVigne invited Chris McDaniel to become a committee member on the Economic Development Committee and he said he would be willing to speak with her about what that would involve.

Joel Ford-102 S Windwood-He asked exacly what the use tax would be. Mayor Powers and LaDonna Allen said it would be a tax on online purchases only and that if you don't purchase anything online, you do not pay the tax. There was discussion about the city lobbying for the tax and Mayor Powers said as the city we are not allowed to do anything other than provide information; we are not legally allowed to campaign for the tax. There was also discussion from the audience about the city changing the wording on the ballot to ensure that people understand what it is. Mayor Powers said the wording on the ballot is specifically required by the State of Missouri and the city is not legally allowed to change it at all. LaDonna Allen said the city did pass an ordinance specifying that the intention of the current Board of Aldermen was to use that for public safety purposes specifically. She said they cannot dictate how future Boards allocate the money, but the current Board plans on using it for public safety. LaDonna Allen said the citizens could certainly spread the word and encourage other citizens to vote for the use tax, but the city cannot. LaDonna Allen said the last time the use tax was on the ballot, the city held three or four informational meetings to give people more information, and only one person showed up to those meetings. Kristina Dunlap said that was correct.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Steve Lawver said he had a meeting with the police department this afternoon. He said they are concerned and scared for their safety. He said there is a problem with both retention and recruitment. He said there is only five or ten people now going through the police academy and all those people are already contracted with other departments. Steve said currently it takes approximately \$10,000 to go through the police academy. He said if the use tax passes, that would be a long-term solution that would make raises sustainable. But if it does not pass, we will have to start cutting services.

LaDonna Allen talked about the current pay rates of the police officers and said none of them are only making less than \$17.00 per hour, which is what was said on Facebook multiple times. LaDonna Allen also discussed the proposed raises that would bring our officers to comparable rates and said everyone needed to remember that whatever pay rates might be decided we have to add an additional 30% in benefits that the city provides.

Joel Ford asked what specifically contributed to the revenue for the general fund. LaDonna Allen said that the city's portion of the general sales tax and the general fund portion of the real estate and property taxes are what primarily provide for the general fund. Mayor Powers pointed out that of the revenue collected, only a little over half goes to the general fund, and the rest goes to the general obligation fund to pay for the bond on the Community Center. LaDonna Allen said that the State of Missouri also uses the Hancock Amendment to ensure the city's tax revenue doesn't create a windfall when valuations go up. She said that for as much as the valuations

rose for the 2023 tax year, the city would collect an additional \$1,700 if 100% of the people paid their taxes. Mayor Powers said a full collection for the general fund taxes collection on real and personal property would be around \$600,000.

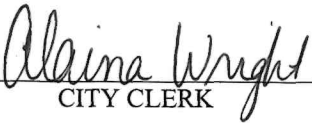
Steve Lawver said he put a job opening for police officers on Indeed.com and received 10 applications. Of those, only two were already POST certified.

Chief McCall said they are looking at transferring dispatching services to JasCo and just keeping a couple of police clerks on for records requests and other office tasks. He said that would help make raises sustainable in the event the use tax doesn't pass.

Mayor Powers said this meeting was simply an informational meeting and that the issue of raises would be looked at decided by the Budget Committee and that the meeting covering the police department budget would be February 14, 2024 at 4:15 PM. Hollie LaVigne asked if we could provide pay raises tonight. Steve Lawver said the numbers provided to the Board tonight were not a proposal, it was just information to show what it would take to make the city competitive. He said for raises to take effect before May 1, it would take a process with the budget chair and city clerk to see where the additional payroll money could be taken from.

ADJOURNMENT

Roger Spencer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Bill Maguire seconded. All in favor. No opposed with two absent. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.


CITY CLERK


MAYOR